

GLOBAL NEWS

UK GROCERY CHAIN BANS ASPARTAME SWEETENER

The UK grocery chain, Iceland, has announced that it is banning aspartame, the artificial sweetener better known as NutraSweet, from its own-label foods.

The move follows growing concerns among consumers about a possible link between the sweetener and brain tumours. These concerns, spread on the Internet, are hotly disputed by NutraSweet's owner, the GM food giant Monsanto.

Aspartame is consumed by 250 million people worldwide and has been used in low-calorie food and drinks such as Diet Coke for 20 years. In the US alone, 20 billion cans of soft drink—most containing NutraSweet—are consumed each year.

Iceland was the first "green" grocer to ban GM foods from its lines. Its unique stand against aspartame is being closely watched by its larger supermarket rivals. (Source: The Sunday Times, London, 25 October 1999, www.sunday-times.co.uk)

TSUNAMI BOMB SECRET IS OUT

Top-secret wartime experiments were conducted off the New Zealand coast to perfect a tidal-wave bomb, believed to be potentially as effective as the atomic bomb.

Thomas Leech, an Australian professor at Auckland University, set off a series of

underwater explosions that triggered mini tidal waves at Whangaparaoa, just north of Auckland, in 1944 and 1945, the *New Zealand Herald* reported on 25 September.

Professor Leech's work was considered so significant that US defence chiefs said that if the project had been completed before the end of the war, it could have played a role as effective as that of the atomic bomb. Details of the tsunami bomb, known as Project *Seal*, are contained in 53-year-old top-secret documents released by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

(Source: Sunday Times, Perth, Western Australia, 26 September 1999, p. 32).

WILDLIFE LAW OFFICERS CRACK DOWN ON HUNTERS

In March 1999, 40 officers, divided into 10 four-man teams, swooped in with helicopters in a pre-dawn raid to seize six suspects in Dorchester County, MD, USA.

The principal suspect, Robert Gootee, was hauled from his bed and led away in chains. His wife was not allowed to call anyone, and her neighbours were not allowed to come in to comfort her for four-and-a-half hours.

Apparently the armed raid was preceded by a four-year investigation. But what kind of offence could have precipitated such drastic action?

Gootee was charged with: possession of an undersized striped bass; striped bass out of season; untagged striped bass; possession of summer flounder out of season; failure to tag and check deer within 24 hours; and possession of a loaded weapon in a vehicle. The agents involved were from the state and US Fish and Wildlife Service. And the target for the raid was the Golden Hills Hunt Club.

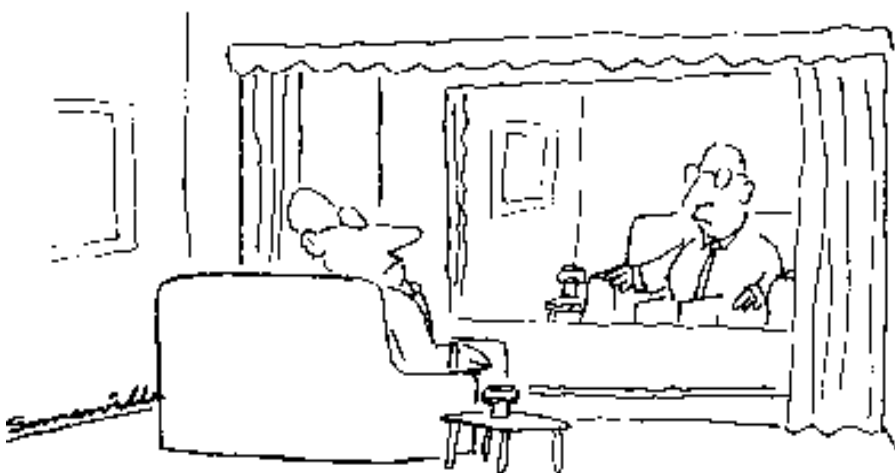
Gootee, the club treasurer, was hauled away with such "evidence" as deer and duck mounts and a framed photograph of his retriever bringing in a duck. Eventually, 24 other club members were charged with related offences, including failure to wear sufficient fluorescent orange clothing while hunting.

Are US forests being turned into police states? A report in the September 1999 issue of the usually low-key *Field & Stream* Magazine would suggest as much:

"Looking for firepower, firefights and other fun stuff? Forget the SEALs; Fish and Game is the place to be.

"Wardens may be watching too many cop shows. How else can one explain why increasing numbers of them seem to reject their workday reality and the routine of dealing with essentially law-abiding people in favor of a world in which the everyday sportsman is an ex-army commando ready for a shoot-out or a high-speed car chase?"

"Recruits to wildlife law enforcement now spend more time learning how to break down the doors of alleged poachers than how to differentiate the various species of sunfish. The April 1999 issue



DÈJA VIEW

of *Wildlife in North Carolina* describes the boot camp that would-be officers go through in that state: "Relentless physical exercise, material training and plenty of barracks inspections are the norm for the first two weeks of wildlife recruit school...this includes 40 hours of firearms training as well as many hours mastering defensive tactics to disarm suspects."

The piece goes on to explain that the rationale used by many agencies for such official militancy is a claim that game wardens are "seven times more likely to be killed during an assault on the job than any other type of law officer".

The trouble with that statistic is that there is no basis for it in fact. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in 1997 sixty-five law enforcement officers of all kinds nationwide were killed in the line of duty. Not one was a warden.

(Source: By Joseph Farah, 10 September 1999, *WorldNetDaily.com*)

EUROPEAN SECURITY GROUP TO GUARD THE PENTAGON

Europe's largest privately owned security company, Group 4 Securitas BV, has won a multimillion-dollar contract with the US Department of Defense (DoD) to provide computer-based security and access to the Pentagon.

Group 4 Securitas, which describes itself as "world leader in access control", will provide more than 1,000 remote monitor units (RMUs) to scan more than 50,000 smart cards—carried by over 23,000 civilian and military employees in one of the largest office buildings in the world, with 40 kilometres of corridor and 3,700,000 square feet of office space—using its exclusive multinode system, compatible with all card types, to provide high-security card access.

The RMUs can operate independently of the central data control server if communication is lost, retaining the capability to recognise invalid passes.

Group 4 is registered in the tax-free haven of Willemstad, the capital of Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles, and currently operates in more than 40 countries, with an estimated workforce of 80,000 and an annual turnover in excess of US\$1,200 million.

Group 4 provides manned and electronic security for Irish Government buildings, including the Department of Justice. In the UK, the company is responsible for prison

management and court escort duties for the Home Office.

On the "down" side, one of the company's high-profile blunders occurred in 1990 when the IRA penetrated Group 4 security at the Royal Overseas League in central London and taped a Semtex device in a plastic lunch box beneath the lid of the speaker's lectern, timed to explode during an international conference on terrorism. The conference was organised by the Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism (ISCT) and was attended by delegates from the FBI, the CIA as well as representatives of the British intelligence, police and military establishment.

(Source: *Intelligence*, no. 105, 18 October 1999, p. 3)

OCTOPUS CONSPIRACY CLAIMS ANOTHER LIFE?

The co-author of the book, *The Octopus* (about a writer who died mysteriously investigating an international conspiracy), has died under mysterious circumstances. Jim Keith, who co-wrote *The Octopus* with Kenn Thomas, based on the notes of writer Danny Casolaro, died at Washoe Medical Hospital after going in for knee surgery.

Rumours suggest that Keith was killed after revealing the name of the physician who claimed Princess Diana was pregnant at the time of her death.

"I have long noted the connections between the Octopus story and the death of Diana," says Keith's co-author, Kenn Thomas.

The web news service where Jim Keith named the source has become inaccessible since his death.

Danny Casolaro died in August 1991 in Martinsburg, West Virginia, of what was said to be suicide. He was investigating the theft of a super-surveillance software called PROMIS, involving Justice Department officials and a shadowy international group he called "the Octopus".

Two congressional investigations into the PROMIS case (also known as the Inslaw case, after the name of the company that created PROMIS) recommended that Casolaro's death be investigated as a homicide. Keith and Thomas obtained the notes that Casolaro left behind and made them the basis of their book, *The Octopus*, published by Feral House in 1997.

Jim Keith fell from a stage at the Burning Man arts event in Black Rock, Nevada, north of Reno, his home town, and broke his knee.

He went to the Washoe Medical Hospital there, and died during surgery on September 7 at 8.10 pm when a blood clot entered one of his lungs.

In addition to co-authoring *The Octopus*, Keith wrote many other popular books on conspiracy topics, including *Mind Control/World Control*, *Black Helicopters over America*, *Casebook on Alternative 3* and *OKC Bomb*.

A tribute page to Jim Keith can be found at www.umsl.edu/~skthoma/urls.htm.

(Source: *Kenn Thomas, Editor, Steamshovel Press, USA, 14 September 1999*)



DR HULDA CLARK'S COSTLY LEGAL BATTLE

What happened to Dr Royal Raymond Rife, Dr Stanislaw Burzynski and other pioneers in medicine has finally happened to medical research scientist Hulda Clark, PhD, ND.

As many NEXUS readers will know, Dr Hulda Clark has helped thousands of people around the world cure themselves of many ailments and diseases. Her approach is to remove exposure to solvents and to remove parasites from the body.

On 20 September, Dr Hulda Clark was arrested in San Diego. She was subsequently held in a prison in Santee, waiting extradition to Indiana where she is charged with practising medicine without a licence—a class C felony with a penalty of two to eight years in prison.

The patients in her clinic in Mexico—most of them terminally ill, but getting better under Dr Clark's supervision—had to be sent home to try to do the protocols on their own.

Dr Clark was escorted from prison on 4 October and arrived in Indiana on 6 October at 2.30 am. A hearing was held at 9.00 am and bail was set at US\$10,000. Dr Clark was offered a plea bargain with a fine if she pleaded guilty, but she pleaded *not* guilty. The trial will be held on 2 February 2000.

(Source: *Dr Clark Research Association*, 8135 Engineer Road #2748, San Diego, CA 92111, USA, tel 1800 220 3741 [toll-free in US], fax +1 [858] 565 0058, website www.freedrclark.com/)

MCCABE CLOSER TO FREEDOM

After 547 days in prison, Ed McCabe was released and transferred to a halfway house in Miami, Florida, on 6 October 1999.

Ed McCabe is the man who publicised oxygen therapies in North America and in many countries around the world through public talks and his book, *Oxygen Therapies: A New Way of Approaching Disease*. In the spring of 1997, the United States Department of Justice and the Internal Revenue Service launched an inquiry into Ed, putting his life under a magnifying glass. He was arrested on 7 April 1998.

Please send correspondence to: Ed McCabe, c/o 9845 NE 2nd Ave, Miami Shores, FL 33138-2350, USA. (Source: *Oxygen Therapies website*, www.oxytherapy.com)

CALL FOR REGISTER OF ALL CLINICAL TRIALS

Failure to report the results of randomised trials constitutes scientific and ethical misconduct, according to Dr Iain Chalmers, director of the UK Cochrane Centre. Dr Chalmers and the editors of the *British Medical Journal* and the *Lancet* have called for an international register of all clinical trials to be established.

Dr Chalmers said that "prospective registration and public access to the results of all randomised trials should be required by organisations responsible for protecting the public". These organisations should include drug licensing authorities and

research ethics committees. Trials should be registered, he argued, to inform patients, clinicians and other decision-makers about trials in which they could participate, to prevent costly research duplication and to promote multicentre trial collaboration.

"A substantial problem remains," he said, "because studies with disappointing or negative results are less likely to be submitted for publication."

Dr Chalmers presented several examples of such biased underreporting of research.

A randomised trial of the class-I antiarrhythmia drug lorainide with acute myocardial infarction, carried out in 1980, remained unreported for 13 years. The increased death rate in the lorainide group was thought to be a chance finding, and the use of class-I antiarrhythmic drugs generally increased.

"At the peak of their use in the late 1980s," said Dr Chalmers, "it was estimated that class-I antiarrhythmic drugs given to people with heart attacks were causing between 20,000 and 70,000 premature deaths every year in the United States alone. This yearly total of deaths is of the same magnitude as the total number of Americans who died in the Vietnam War."

Dr Chalmers welcomed the launch of an online register of randomised, controlled trials (www.controlled-trials.com) but warned that the comprehensive registration of planned, ongoing and unpublished controlled trials is unlikely to happen "unless there is legal clout".

(Source: *British Medical Journal* 319:939, 9 October 1999, www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/319/7215/939/a)

FOOD CHAIN FILTH

For at least six months in the cattle feed factory at the Caillaud plant in northern France, excrement from staff toilets was plumbed into the production line. Between August 1998 and March 1999, 15 to 20 tonnes of human and other sewage sludge was mixed each week into feed for chickens, pigs and sheep.

Workers revealed last week that blood from carcasses was also swept into the stinking swill. "Every time they clean the filters, the smell is so bad that it makes you want to vomit," said Bernard Guillard, a 52-year-old worker at the factory in Javené, Brittany.

(Source: *The Sunday Times*, London, 31 October 1999, www.sunday-times.co.uk)



2 While many were shocked about revelations that human sewage had been added to French cattle feed, residents from the village of Saxthorpe, north Norfolk, England, who live close to Great Farm, know that for years British cattle have been eating silage that has been cultivated on land laden with sewage.

Great Farm has three lagoons which are lined with black polythene and can each hold about a million gallons of sewage sludge. "It's like a dark porridge with a thick, grey crust covering it," said Aubrey Poberefsky, 62, who lives in Saxthorpe. "It's full of bacteria and chemicals, but they have been putting thousands of gallons of it onto the fields."

(Source: Sunday Times, 31 October 1999)

3 The Belgian Government has also admitted that human and animal waste was being mixed into animal feed until early 1999. The country's farm minister was responding to a television report which said sludge from slaughterhouses and toilets had ended up in Belgium's food chain.

The VTR television network also reported that waste from slaughterhouses, toilets and showers was mixed in with animal feed in Belgium.

(Source: Sightings website, 22 September 1999, www.sightings.com)

NATURAL LIGHT IMPROVES STUDENT TEST SCORES

A study of three American school districts suggests that one good way to raise test scores is to let the sunshine in. The study, done by a California energy-consulting firm, may be the best evidence yet to support the commonsense notion that natural light helps people work better.

Investigators with the Hescong Mahone Group rated the districts' elementary schools on the amount and distribution of light in their classrooms. They then took a standardised test result, and after controlling for other factors that affect test performance (e.g., family income) they found that students exposed to the most daylight also had significantly higher test scores.

In Seattle, students in light-filled schools scored 9 to 13 per cent higher on maths and reading tests than those with the least light.

In a related study, Hescong Mahone looked at 108 stores in an unnamed retail chain and found that those with skylights had 40 per cent higher sales on average.

(Source: www.abc.net.au/news/newslink/nat/newsnat-14oct1999-26.htm)

WEATHER WARNING

A piece of fossilised coral, dated at 125,000 years old, looks as if it could transform our understanding of El Niño—the Pacific Ocean phenomenon that is the crucible of much of the world's climate.

Dan Schrag, who is based at Harvard University's Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, discovered the coral while holidaying in Indonesia recently.

Until recently, climatologists looked on El Niño as an aberration in the tropical Pacific, of only passing interest to the outside world. But in the past two decades, it has become the "fifth horseman of the Apocalypse", a bringer of devastating floods, fires and famine from Ethiopia to Indonesia to Ecuador and a sender of weird weather around the world.

It has been appearing more frequently, with effects that last longer than ever. Its activity is unparalleled in the historical record. And yet nobody could be sure if this is a perfectly normal blip, or an alarming consequence of human-induced climate change.

For climatologists, El Niño is the flywheel of the world's climate, a redistributor of heat and energy that kicks in when the regular circulation systems cannot cope. In normal times, the winds and waters flow across the tropical Pacific from the Americas in the east to Indonesia in the west, driven by the Earth's rotation. In the tropical heat, the water warms as it goes. The result is the gradual accumulation of a pool of warm water around Indonesia that can be 40 centimetres higher and several degrees warmer than water on the other side of the ocean. This cannot last and, typically every three to seven years, this warm water breaks out and flows back across the surface of the ocean. As the pattern of ocean currents shifts, so do the wind and air pressure systems associated with it—and with them, the weather. So the wet rainforest climate of Indonesia drenches the normally arid Pacific islands and often reaches the coastal deserts of the Americas. Meanwhile, Indonesia and much of Australia dry out.

But scientists have been uncertain about how far back El Niño goes. Reliable climate and ocean records cover only a century or so; delving further requires an alternative source of information.

Schrag's chunk of coral pushes back the date of the first recorded El Niño by more than 100,000 years, to before the last ice age. In a paper due for publication shortly in *Geophysical Research Letters*, Schrag and his colleague Konrad Huguen will reveal their analysis of the isotopic signature of the annual growth layers inside the Sulawesi coral, and use it to plot the pattern of the ancient El Niños. According to Schrag, the pattern of El Niño events revealed in his 125,000-year-old coral looks exactly like the modern period

before 1976, but nothing like the post-1976 period. He has examined in detail the "return period" for El Niños, both in the ancient coral and modern meteorological and coral records, and found that, in the modern record, prior to 1976 the dominant return period for El Niño was around six years. That was also the case in the 65-year time-slice in his ancient coral. But the post-1976 record shows a peak return period at 3.5 years. The implication is that the cycling of El Niño was highly stable over hundreds of thousands of years, but has changed fundamentally in the past quarter-century.

The crucial question is what lies behind this change. Has El Niño been disturbed by some external factor, such as global warming, or is it simply on a short-lived, exuberant joyride?

One way to check, says Schrag, is to look for signs of recent warming in the ocean. Together with Tom Guilderson from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, he has recently pointed out that the unique signature of the post-1976 El Niños is down to a very specific warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific during the cold season. This area of ocean is a constant battleground between warm waters at the surface and cold waters that well up from the deep. Most of the time the upwelling is dominant. But during El Niños, when warm waters wash across the Pacific from the west, the upwelling is shut off. What seems to have happened is that this shutoff has become near permanent.

Since 1976, water at the surface in the eastern Pacific has been richer in carbon-14, showing that deep water is not welling up as much as before. Upwelling normally keeps the eastern Pacific cool, maintains the normal trade winds and so suppresses the outbreak of El Niños. Reduce the upwelling and the system is permanently primed for an El Niño. Schrag concludes that the post-1976 change in the thermocline may be responsible for the increase in the frequency and intensity of El Niño events since then.

Does any of this matter beyond the Pacific Ocean? As climatologists discover more and more about the workings of the oceans and atmosphere, they realise how central El Niño is to the functioning of the entire climate system.

The Indian Ocean shows its own post-1976 shift. Analysis of weather statistics from the remote Chagos Archipelago, by Charles Sheppard of the University of Warwick, found that around the mid-1970s average air temperatures abruptly rose by a degree, while cloud cover shrank by 50 per cent.

Is the shift in El Niño the long-sought "smoking gun" that will convict greenhouse gases of causing climatic mayhem?

(Source: From an article by Fred Pearce, *New Scientist*, London, 9 October 1999)